

Session 1: Challenges: Pacific Library Cases

Moderator: Verena Baiyereh

MINISTRY OF FISHERIES AND MARINE RESOURCES LIBRARY: ITS DEVELOPMENT, IMPORTANCE, POTENTIAL, STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES AND CHALLENGES

Ataban T. Kapule

SFO – Information & Library
Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
Solomon Islands

Abstract:

The principle goals and objectives for the establishment of the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) Library of the Solomon Islands are to collect, organize, disseminate and manage published fisheries and fisheries related information in accordance with standard library practices. The library's development is designed to facilitate sound decision-making; its strengths and weaknesses determine the achievement of its goals and objectives and simultaneously map its ongoing and future work programs. Its purpose is to advance recognition of the importance of information as power to resolve and harmonize conflicts of interests, and its task is to collect, organize and disseminate information in a timely manner, aiming at achieving maximum benefits through proper development, management, and sustainable harvesting of fisheries and marine resources.

Keywords: Fisheries, fishery resources, Solomon Islands, Pacific, libraries.

Country Profile

The Solomon Islands are located in the Western Pacific Ocean between 05° South and 12° South and 155° East and 170° East. The southern and eastern Solomon Islands were progressively annexed and placed under the British protection in the 1890s, and Santa Isabel and the other islands to the north were ceded by Germany in 1900.

The Solomon Islands, formerly known as the British Solomon Islands Protectorate, gained full self-government on 2nd January 1976 and two years later achieved political independence on 7th July 1978. The land area of the Solomon Islands is approximately 29,785 sq km and it has an estimated population of 533,672 in 2005, according to the *Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2005/6 National Report* produced by the Ministry of Commerce and Trade, and its annual growth rate is 4.4%. Its Exclusive Economic Zone is approximately 325,400 square nautical miles (Kawaley, 2006).

Introduction

Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources

The institutionalization of the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) as a Ministry became a reality during the Sogavare regime that ruled the country from 2006–2007. Prior to gaining Ministerial status, since its inception in the early 1970's as an important government entity the Fisheries Department has been administered under the auspices of the Ministry of Natural Resources, along with the Department of Geology, Mines and Energy, and the Department of Forest, Environment and Conservation.

The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources previously was also an integral component of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and then became a Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources until it became a Ministry of its own in 2006. It is important to note this development because of its significant impact on the library currently.

The MFMR's Mission Statement is:

The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) leads the challenge to sustainably manage the nation's offshore and inshore fisheries, is active in promoting Community Based Resource Management, and aims to contribute pro-actively in the sustainable management of the Pacific Island region's offshore resources.

The MFMR strives to provide an effective and efficient service to all stakeholders, promote government inter-agency cooperation and act as the focal point for national capacity building, research and development within the sector

Figure 1. MFMR Corporate Plan 2014-2018.

4.2. MFMR Value and Philosophy

The MFMR's philosophy consolidates its values, relationships with stakeholders, policies, culture, and management style. The MFMR values are articulated through the Solomon Islands Public Service Code of Conduct, which contains the five key ethical principles of:

- Respect for the law and government.
- Respect for people.
- Integrity.
- Diligence.
- Economy and efficiency.

4.3. Goals and Strategic Objectives

The sectoral goals, and the objectives to achieve these goals, are articulated below and are broken down into four main focal areas for the corporate plan:

1. Fisheries resources and ecosystem management.
2. Private sector development and investment.
3. Fisheries compliance (the operational arm of fisheries management).
4. Governance and institutional development.

Goal 1: Sustainable fisheries resource management and promotion of livelihood opportunities through the conservation and management of oceanic and coastal ecosystems.

Goal 2: Promotion of private sector development, investment and secure market access to achieve higher economic returns and social benefits from the use of marine resources.

Goal 3: The effective management of national and shared fish stocks through a strengthening of fisheries compliance and enforcement.

Goal 4: Improved fisheries governance supported by a strengthening of the institutional framework of the sector.

MFMR Library Objectives

The primary purpose for the development of the MFMR Library is to support the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources' policy objectives, as specified in successive MFMR Corporate Plans, and to be incorporated as an integral unit of the statistics division vested with:

- (a) A vision, recognizing the importance of centralization of information as an asset, power, solution to harmonizing conflict of interest and opinion at the national, provincial and rural levels; to alleviate poverty and improve levels of literacy; and to improve health and living standards.
- (b) A mission to collect, organize, manage, disseminate information on fisheries and marine resources to its targeted audiences and develop a systematic reader/user services, and to maintain an online library collection.
- (c) An aim to achieve maximum social, economic and political benefits through the proper development, management and sustainable harvesting of all fisheries resources, by collecting, processing, organizing and disseminating of information to facilitate decision-making in support of the MFMR Corporate Plan 2014–2018.

Core Activities

Task No.	Task Description	Duration
	Formulate MFMR Library Mission Statement and submit to the Executive Management for consideration & comments and editing,	Formulation stage
1.	Formulate a Library Policy Statement and submit to the Executive Management for their deliberation/and approval for implementation,	Formulation stage
2.	Sorting out, scanning, online cataloguing and spine labeling of all library materials including serial publications and fisheries related articles,	Ongoing
3.	Write-up reports on meetings and training attended for office records and for staff information updates,	One-off Rept.
4.	General In-House up-keeping, maintenance and management of the Library operation,	Ongoing
5.	Provide information to library users and respond to online requests for information,	Ongoing
6.	Other tasks as and when called for by my immediate supervisor – Chief Fisheries Officer, ICT & Statistics Division	Ongoing

Figure 2. 2014 Library Work Program.

Achievements Between July 2011 – July 2014

- The library is now adequately housed in its own allocated space.
- Installation of a DocuScann C4250 (currently needs to be reconnected).
- Significant increase of library users from secondary schools within the Honiara national capital city and from the Provinces.
- Marginal increase in the number of MFMR Officers using the library.
- Continued access to the Internet, email and other ICT facilities.
- Continued building of the E-Collection from Internet searches.

Challenges Between July 2011–July 2014

The Library was again been relocated in a 14' x 10' space in late 2013 and this was completed in early 2014. The relocation process has resulted in the loss and misplacement of some of the library materials.

Though the current library space is reduced in size by around 30%, the number of users continues to rise significantly.

The difficulties in getting clearance to collect survey reports, research papers and workshop presentations from officers of the Ministry also continue to persist. Therefore it is essential to formulate a process that would ensure that these reports are cleared for public citation.

2013 - 2014 Regional and International Meetings (FFC/PNA/PTF)

The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources in 2013 and 2014 hosted two regional agency meetings – the meeting of the Forum Fisheries Committee, which is the governing body of the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency, and Parties to the Nauru Agreement, to which Solomon Islands is also a party. It also hosted an international meeting known as the Pacific Tuna Forum. Hosting such meetings presents its own challenges in preparation and the personnel needed to efficiently and successfully coordinate and administer the meetings. The library was also involved in helping in the preparations and day-to-day agendas of these meetings.

Library Plans For the Next Two Years (2014 – 2016)

- Continue with ongoing activities in the library work program.
- Continue building, processing, organizing and disseminating information from the E-Collection downloaded from the Internet.

MFMR ICT system relocated to ICTU (Information Communication Technology Unit) in July 2014 and will become part of the Solomon Islands Government initiative to centralize all Ministries ICT system. This means that Fisheries Library system (KOHA) will be accessed via network at its new location. Since migrating the MFMR Server to its new location the Koha library software has been inaccessible.

Library Management and Classification System In Use

The MFMR Library is an integral unit of the Statistics Division and therefore is an undertaking of the Head of the Statistics in planning, management, budgeting, delegation of task and supervision. Thus the library does not have its own budget; however, its budgetary needs are provided for under the division's approved allocation of about SBD250,000 - 00 for 2014.

The Senior Fisheries Officer – Library and Information by designation, is the Officer charged with the development of the library and with ensuring that its operation satisfactorily meets the library objectives as set out above.

The MFMR Library is currently using the Koha Library software for its online catalog. The classification system in use is the DDC Abridged 14th edition. The Sears list of subject headings and the Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Thesaurus subject listing are also used interchangeably. In regards to the Greenstone Library software, since it crashed in 2009, it has been out of order. However, the Library is considering its advantages over Koha as far as collection automation digitization is concerned.

Website Development

The arrangements for the development of a MFMR website are currently underway and are being undertaken by the Makem Strong, Solomon Islands Fisheries (MSSIF) project and funded by New Zealand Aid. Hopefully this undertaking will be completed before the end of 2014 or early in 2015. The development of the website would also allow online access to the MFMR library collection.

Potential

The need for organization and dissemination of information in a timely manner is essential and of paramount importance in making sound decisions that would have serious consequences on the environment and human lives. Developing a library with intelligible library policies is necessary in achieving the Ministry and Library's aims and objectives. The MFMR Library is no exception. The Library is also in the best position to provide highly/regularly demanded information on fisheries development, legislation and other fisheries related issues.

There is also the potential need to develop at least small but organized collections of published fisheries information at Provincial Fisheries Centres to provide information to the rural communities.

Strengths

The MFMR Library is the only library in the country that houses a satisfactorily comprehensive collection on national and international fisheries development and fisheries-related published and unpublished materials. Though the MFMR Library is currently housed in a relatively small space, it has access to thousands if not millions of materials on fisheries developments and fisheries related subjects through PIMRIS and SPC databases and the Internet.

Another advantage is that the MFMR Library is manned by a certified Librarian who oversees providing library services that satisfy the needs of the MFMR and its targeted audience.

The MFMR Library is also located at a site easily accessible from anywhere within the Honiara township limits and within a few minutes' walk from the newly established Solomon Islands National University.

Weaknesses

The possibility of a financial shortfall is an ever-present weakness in any activity and the MFMR Library operation is no exception. For instance, the library does not have a standalone budget and thus does not have much say in the budgetary processes.

Unlike modern traditional library set-ups, the library does not provide ICT hardware/software facilities for research purposes since most of its collection is in electronic formats. This is also a reflection of financial weaknesses.

The absence of the library's involvement in planning is another weakness that contributes to the current limited research/study space.

Opportunities

Although there are disadvantages as noted above, there also are many opportunities for the MFMR Library to improvise on its status to archive the Ministry's and the Library's objectives. An example is the production of pamphlets for distribution to institutions as a public awareness pro-active measure.

There is also an opportunity to provide users access to an ICT facility for research and to databases in CD-ROM formats and online e-library collections.

Development of Information Centres/mini-libraries at the nine Provincial Fisheries Centres is also another great opportunity for the MFMR Library to provide library services to 80% of the nation's population. The extension of library services to the Provinces would also create job opportunities and it would contribute enormously and significantly to the proper development, management and

dissemination of information at the provincial level. This would also require the training of personnel on at least basic skills in library work.

Threats

The MFMR office building in which the Library is accommodated is located at a site a few meters from the shoreline and is therefore vulnerable to natural disasters such as cyclones, tidal waves and tsunamis.

The continuous updating/upgrading of ICT hardware/software versions also comes with needs that may present technical difficulties. The development of the Government's centralized ICT Unit has already taken its toll on MFMR current day-to-day functions.

Building defects are also continuous threats, causing plumbing leakages, electrical short-circuits and leaking roofs that threaten the collection and safety.

Challenges

The challenges presented here affect:

- a) Realizing the library's potentials, as detailed above, and ascertaining that they are practically and effectively implemented.
- b) The Library's strengths, presenting a challenge to consider its stakeholders in the collection's intellectual content to determine future direction and developments.
- c) The Library's weaknesses. The challenge is to ensure that library's financial needs are guaranteed and that the library is involved in future library development planning.
- d) Opportunities, to ensure that these are carried out to their maximum effect.
- e) Threats. It is necessary to at least formulate a disaster management plan and to give serious consideration to contain other threats as well.

Recommendations

The only way an enterprise can move forward is obviously to develop to its maximum, identify latent potentials, improve on its strengths by strengthening its weaknesses, fully utilize and develop known opportunities, and seriously address natural and man-made threats. If these are done the MFMR Library would be able to satisfactorily help meet the Ministry's and the Library's vision, mission and aims.

Conclusion

In conclusion it is the author's conviction that knowing potentials, strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats are the basis to a way forward in development, and the MFMR Library is no exception.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to register here and express his sincere gratitude in acknowledgement for the assistance rendered by officers of the Ministry in the writing of this paper especially, those who have one way or the other contributed to the MFMR Corporate plan that is also partially cited in this paper.

Disclaimer

The author of this paper is impartially and fully responsible for views expressed in this paper and thus the paper does not necessarily reflect the views of the MFMR.

References

- Kawaley, Ian (1999). Implications of Exclusive Economic Zone Management and Regional Cooperation Between South Pacific Small Midocean Island Commonwealth Territories. *Ocean Development and International Law* 30 4): 333-377.
- Solomon Islands Statistics Office. (2006). *Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2005/6 National Report*. <http://www.spc.int/prism/solomons/index.php/sinso-documents?view=download&fileId=12>.